

# Canada's 200 Mile Fishing Zone

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Establishment of Canada's 200-mile fishing zone in 1977 inaugurated a challenging new era for the nation's oldest primary industry. Creation of the zone, which added 632,000 square nautical miles of ocean area to national fisheries jurisdiction, is revolutionizing this important sector of the Canadian economy.

With full national management control over fisheries resources inside this zone, Canada now harvests the lion's share of marketable food fish in these waters. In 1980 this country led the world in fish export value. The positive impact of extending fisheries management jurisdiction from the former 12-mile limit is evident on both coasts of Canada, but particularly on the Atlantic.

In the waters within and immediately adjacent to the 200-mile Atlantic zone, the increase in Canada's fish landings has been dramatic. Canadian catches in these waters increased from 895,000 metric tonnes (t) in 1976 to 1.1 million t in 1980. In terms of the total amounts taken by all fleets, Canada's share jumped from 42 to 73 per cent.

During the same period, Canada practically doubled its share of the cod catch taken in the same area from 193,000 t in 1976 to 390,000 t in 1980. Significant advances have also been recorded for other important species.

Although the Canadian share has increased markedly, total quantities of fish taken in Atlantic waters since creation of the fishing zone have only marginally increased because of strict catch limits and quotas imposed to rebuild depleted stocks. The principle of Canadian control and primary share of fisheries within the zone has been firmly established. Foreign fishing is allowed to continue in the zone under licence restrictions set by Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and has been limited to fish which is surplus to the needs of Canadian fishermen.

## Total Industry Output

Overall Canadian fish catches from both Atlantic and Pacific coasts and inland areas in 1980 totalled 1.3 million t, valued at \$713 million. Atlantic landings of 1.1 million t were worth \$491 million, while Pacific catches totalled 127,000 t valued at \$174 million, and inland catches amounted to 53,000 t valued at \$47 million.

In 1980, Canada's fish processing industry produced 619,000 t of fish products having a total marketed value of \$1.6 billion. More than three-quarters of Canadian production goes to foreign markets.

Exports in 1980 totalled 485,000 t valued at \$1.2 billion, making Canada the world's top fish exporter in terms of value. Principal markets are the United States, Europe, Japan and the Caribbean.

Some 75,000 fishermen operating 41,000 vessels take part in Canada's sea fisheries. About 25,000 persons are employed by the fish processing industry in more than 800 registered plants.

## Regulating the Harvests

Prior to the extension of Canada's fisheries jurisdiction to 200 miles, the major fisheries off Canada's Atlantic Coast were managed by the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries (ICNAF). The concept of Total Allowable Catch (TAC) and national quota controls was introduced by ICNAF in 1972.

With scientifically based TACs for each stock as its starting point, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in 1976 introduced the first major plan for the allocation of fish stocks within the 200-mile limit among sectors of the Canadian fleet by means of an annual Groundfish Fishing Plan. The plan is developed through extensive consultation with the fishing industry via the Atlantic Groundfish Advisory Committee (AGAC), which comprises representatives of provincial governments, fishermen's organizations, processors, and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The consultative process has been extended to virtually all species, and the development of annual fishing (allocation) plans is now an established facet of fisheries management.

Canada's licensing program for foreign vessels is a key element of modern fisheries management in the 200-mile zone.

This system dictates exactly where, when and how each licensed foreign vessel may take its quota or allotment of fish. These quotas are determined annually by Canadian fishery managers after the requirements

of the Canadian fishing industry have been determined, and are set within the Total Allowable Catch limits established to ensure the future health of the fish stocks. Fish stocks surplus to Canadian needs are allotted to foreign countries with which Canada has bilateral fisheries agreements. These agreements stipulate that foreign nations will fish subject to Canadian laws. They must also comply with conservation measures and other terms and conditions established by Canada.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans, assisted by the Department of National Defence and the Department of Transport, continually monitors fishing activities within the zone through air and sea patrols. Foreign vessels must report to Canadian authorities prior to entering and departing the zone and must report their daily catches on a weekly basis. They are also required to submit to detailed inspection of their operations, catches and records by Canadian surveillance and enforcement personnel.

In addition, Canadian observers are placed on board both foreign and domestic vessels to observe fishing and handling methods as well as to monitor quota management requirements.

Current levels of foreign fishing allowed in the Canadian zone are a small fraction of those prevalent in the same waters in pre-zone years.

After the extension of jurisdiction, one of the first measures undertaken was a reduction of foreign fishing in the zone. The foreign share of the quotas set by Canada has continued to decrease, especially for groundfish species — cod, redfish, pollock, haddock and Greenland halibut — traditionally fished by Canadian vessels. The 1976, 1977 and 1978 Canadian share of the total quotas set for groundfish, for example, was 52, 66 and 70 per cent respectively. In 1979, the Canadian share was 73 per cent — a solid 21 per cent increase over pre-zone days.

Certain stocks of fish are distributed both within the fishing zone and in the area immediately adjacent to it. For these stocks, management is determined by the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO), with Canadian concurrence. Canada is recognized by the



Checking a Fishing Vessel

NAFO convention to have a special interest in allocations in the area beyond the 200-mile zone. Foreign vessels fishing for such NAFO allocations within the Canadian 200-mile zone are subject to all the Canadian requirements previously described.

### Selling the Product

Establishment of the 200-mile zone solved one of the biggest single causes of fishery instability — progressive and serious decline of fish stocks due to the lack of effective management under international arrangements. With the new management regime, which adjusts the amount of fishing to the current status of the stocks, rebuilding of the resource is taking place. Future success lies in strengthening and expanding markets for Canadian products from the 200-mile zone. Although Canadians consume large quantities of fish and seafood products, the fishing industry will continue to rely heavily on foreign markets.

Therefore, Canadians cannot afford to be complacent. Worldwide introduction of 200-mile fishing zones has revolutionized world fish trading patterns. While some

states have lost some of their distant fishing grounds, others have acquired control of their own territories. As a result, the world market has become highly competitive.

Systematic planning to stay ahead in this new marketing environment is perhaps the most important aspect of the overall management plan for the 200-mile zone in the 1980s. Canada must keep prices competitive and demand high for its fish and other seafood products.

To accomplish this, Canada should hold the productivity of its fishing fleet at a high level. The cost per pound of catching fish must be kept as low as possible. During the past several years, some progress has been made in this regard by limiting expansion of the large offshore fishing fleet as stocks recover. The total catch by the existing fleet has already expanded substantially.

Of course, the most vital ingredient of any successful marketing program is being able to promote a consistently high quality product. Canada enjoys a good

reputation for the quality of its fishery products, but there is room for improvement. In addition, changing consumer tastes require continual new product development and adaptation to meet changing market requirements.

High quality products which meet consumer demand mean bigger economic returns to the whole fishing industry, and greater market security for the future. To make the most of opportunities arising from extended jurisdiction, a major national campaign to upgrade quality standards has been initiated. This new program, spearheaded by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, will help build increased value into the catches from the 200-mile zone and permit Canada to further expand and develop both traditional and new markets around the world.



Inspectors Preparing to Board



Up the Ladder

### Conservation Outside Canadian Waters

The 200-mile limit protects most of Canada's fishery interests, but not all. On the Atlantic coast, important stocks overlap the 200-mile limit, and others occur entirely outside the limit, making them vulnerable to depletion through unregulated foreign fishing. On the Pacific coast, important stocks are also beyond Canadian control during their migrations to foreign waters. On both coasts, Canadian salmon are vulnerable to interception and depletion during their migrations outside Canadian waters.

International organizations are in place to protect some of these stocks, in particular NAFO (the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization) for the Atlantic coast; and for the Pacific coast INPFC (International North Pacific Fisheries Commission), IPHC (International Pacific Halibut Commission), and IPSFC (International Pacific Salmon Fisheries Commission). Constant attention must be paid to negotiations within these organizations to ensure they carry out their objectives. Negotiations are also underway for new management structures on both coasts, to ensure that all stocks are maintained at, or restored to, healthy levels to provide for conservation and allow rational utilization.

### Looking to the Future

Canada's fishing scene has changed since the extension of fisheries jurisdiction to 200 miles. New fishery management and control programs made possible by the fishing zone have already produced successful results. Those involved in the industry have reason to anticipate a more stable future for the first time in decades.

It is recognized, however, that the 200-mile zone is not a limitless reservoir of remedies for all economic ills. Sound policies and programs in resource management, exploitation and product marketing, tempered by restraint, will be needed to ensure long-term stability, both of the fragile fish resources and of the vibrant industry dependent on them.



Inspecting Mesh Size

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